



## Police Civilian Advisory Board Study Committee

Date: August 3, 2021

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

### **Attendance**

Karen Bishop	p
Anne Brown	p
Michael Brownstein	p
Elliot Elkin	
Kerrie Fallon	
Julie Flaherty*	p
Laura Gitelson	p
Jillian Harvey*	p

Doug Heim*	p
Carlos Morales	p
Mona Mohtadi	
Sanjay Newton	p
Bob Radochia	p
Kathy Rogers	
Clariss Rowe	p
Susan Ryan-Vollmar	p

\* - non-voting member | p - present

### **Agenda**

The meeting was called to order at 7:09pm

1. Guest Speaker Brian Corr

Susan introduced Brian Corr and gave his biography.

One of his latest presentations was in Bennington VT, population approximately 15,000.

Questions following the presentation:

Sanjay - Do you have any specific small communities you'd suggest we look at?

Brian - Nacole has a database and we can search by size of community/force. Very willing to provide followup on specific ones of interest.

Sanjay - What advice do you have for us as a smaller community?

Brian - One important metric is to look at the number of complaints per year. Cambridge averages 100,000 calls for service and averages 15-25 complaints per year. This is very small and they've found it doesn't merit investing in full-time investigators. Suggested that we review the number of complaints (knowing it would probably be somewhat larger with a new reporting structure). If you're getting 250 complaints a year then you could invest in an investigative model, but for 5 complaints a year maybe you create a hybrid model where you review completed investigations and complaints and other relevant information and then you have a role in making policy suggestions or doing regular policy reviews. For a town Arlington's size you're probably not looking at a big agency with 5 investigators and all of that.

Michael - can you help unpack legitimacy, which can be kind of a squishy term? Are there potential strategies to move forward in having a shared understanding?

Brian - One: processes matter. Do your best to make sure stakeholders are included on the front end of this process. Two: once you're established the challenge is about making sure people know that you exist by continually being out in the community. Three: The Justice Collaboratory at Yale is also doing work in this area that may be of interest.

Chief Flaherty - Will reach out to Pittsfield Chief to learn more about their model and see if it might make sense to bring him here. What effects do you think Police Reform will have on Cambridge? What discipline authority do you have? What barriers do you have with collective bargaining and civil service?

Brian - Cambridge has no power over discipline and does not recommend specific discipline. In general it's important for boards that do have that authority to develop shared understanding with the chief about how discipline recommendations are made. Cambridge was established in 1984 so specific Collective Bargaining issues were resolved long ago. Sometimes Collective Bargaining has an indirect effect on the way the board comes to findings in order to support grievance processes. In terms of Police Reform, it's a little bit of wait and see, especially given other changes in police and city leadership happening in Cambridge. Feel like it's going to open up some possibilities to share additional information about complaints and provide additional transparency.

Doug - Do you have experience in how an oversight body integrates with other committees and commissions that might have related purviews or authority to receive complaints, i.e. Human Rights Commission. Is there a way to integrate or should they be completely separate? And can you talk about how the

professional staff and board members share work and balance tasks? Doug imagines that much of the work is done by the professional staff.

Brian - The day-to-day work happens in the office. Board meets monthly and also does a fair amount of community outreach as well as regular training. But the day-to-day receiving of complaints and following up with people is done by me. Board member work is reading, training, deliberating and planning. In terms of deliberation, Brian is focused on guard rails and principles but is not a board member so tries not to guide deliberations. In terms of the Human Rights commission, you want Civilian Oversight that has expertise and is specifically focused on oversight of law enforcement. There are opportunities for complaint intake across multiple boards but you want one board to be able to.

Susan read an excerpt from a recent report in Lexington and asked for Brian's insight. The excerpt was about a perception that there was a perception that officers disproportionately pull over black motorists. And officers of color reported discrimination or negative race-based incidents with residents of the town. How does a community work together to move forward from a situation like this? Is Civilian Oversight a way to deal with these very complex, emotional issues.

Brian - Both of those things, which at first seem contradictory, match our history. Both stories are about perception and both can be the lived experience of those involved. If what the report had said was that there were disparities in stops then Civilian Oversight could have a part to play. But if there are valid reasons for stops then Civilian Oversight is not going to fix people's perception that they're being targeted.

Susan - what kind of data and transparency could they use to bring more facts to the discussion.

Brian - Bennington VT dealt with a discrepancy between police and the community perception about enforcing traffic violations. Police saw their stops as keeping the community safe and some community members felt targeted. The other way to deal with these kinds of issues is giving a forum for people to tell their stories. This is hard to do and requires the tools and expertise to support people sharing their stories.

Laura thanked Brian for his time, especially on short notice.

2. Updates from committees/constituencies  
Deferred to a future meeting.
3. Presentation on comparison to area towns - Bob  
Deferred to a future meeting.

4. Update on POST and Arlington policies - Chief Flaherty  
Deferred to a future meeting.
5. Approve minutes from prior meetings  
Vote: to approve 07/20/2021 minutes  
Approved unanimously
6. Adjourn  
Vote: to adjourn 8:56pm  
Approved unanimously